

Message Text

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65

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 /056 W

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O 032110Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 527

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2867

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF ASSUMPTION OF FULL POWERS BY MELGAR

REF: STATE 154563

1. THE EMBASSY

HAS THE SAME PRESS REPORT REFERRED TO IN REFTEL.

THE REPORT HAS A LATIN BY-LINE, IS DATED JUNE 21 AND REFERS
TO A LOCAL RADIO NEWS REPORT.

2. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE SUBSTANCE OF THE REPORT IS

CORRECT. CERTAINLY THERE HAS BEEN NO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN
THE CHIEF OF STATE AND THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL OVER HIS
DESIRE FOR GREATER FREEDOM OF ACTION TO DIRECT THE COUNTRY.
FURTHERMORE, THE EMBASSY HAS NOT HEARD OF DISCONTENT AMONG
LOWER RANKING OFFICERS FORCING THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL
TO GIVE MELLER SUCH FREEDOM OF ACTION.

3. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL

HAS GIVEN MELGAR ORDERS TO USE A FIRM HAND IN DEALING WITH
THE RECENT DISORDER IN JUTICALPA AND TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER.
IN THAT SITUATION, HE HAS FULL AUTHORITY TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS
WITHOUT CONSTANT RECOURSE TO THE COUNCIL. HOWEVER, AT LEAST
AT THIS STAGE, HIS BASIC POWER POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE COUNCIL
HAS NOT CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY AND HE REMAINS IN OFFICE SUBJECT
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TO THEIR WISHES.

4. IN A JULY 3 CONVERSATION, BATRES TOLD POLOFF THAT MELGAR
COULD IN TIME CONSOLIDATE POSITION TO GREATER EXTENT IF COUNCIL
CONTINUES TO GRANT HIM FREEDOM TO DEAL WITH SITUATIONS LIKE THE
JUTICALPA DISTURBANCE. OBVIOUSLY ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT SITUA-
TIONS CONFRONTING THE COUNCIL IS HOW TO HANDLE THE PRESS OF
EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EXERCISING
CONTROL OVER THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. THE MEMBERS OF THE
COUNCIL DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO CARRY OUT BOTH
FUNCTIONS WITH FULL SUCCESS. A LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT WOULD
BEILME NOMINATION OF AN "INNER COUNCIL" TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS
NOT REQUIRING THE CONVOCAION OF THE FULL COUNCIL. THE MILGP
COMMANDER WAS TOLD BY A FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE THAT THE COUNCIL
IS PLANNING TO SET UP SUCH A TEN MEMBER BODY IN THE NEAR
FUTURE.
SOWASH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TEGUCI02867
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750231-0790
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750785/aaaacyic.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 154563
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 SEP 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTS OF ASSUMPTION OF FULL POWERS BY MELGAR
TAGS: PINT, HO, (MELGAR CASTRO, JUAN LBERTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006